1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

TABLE III. REGIMENTAL NAMES

Men's regiments		*Approximate year of formation*	*Women's regiments*	
Information poor	*Information good*		*Information good*	*Information poor*
Majekwane		1821		
Ziolomba		1824		
Somfula		1827		
Machaya Imiti		1830		
Zimpofu		1833		
Makupu		1836		
Ngowongo, Macihungu		1839		
Mangazi, Magazi		1842		
Malunge, Mavimba (a)		1845		
Masapi, Mashapi		1848		
Manyoka, Zinyoka		1851		
Manyinsa, Manyisa		1854		
Majuwela		1857		
Majunge, Mayunge		1859		
Maiyiza (c)		1861		
	Zinkhondo, Macaiya	1863		
Masala		1866		
	Macona	1869		
Maola (d)		1871		
Zinyati	Manyela	1874		
	Mabema (b)	1877		Matesa
Maola (d)		1879		
Masoo, Mazoo		1882		
	Kabaenda	1885	Mashambisa	Matukwa
	Mafelakudeni	1889	Magalela	Mashaose
Lembani, Maiyiza (c)	Cimale, Lembalemba	1892	Mashuimela	Makanya
	Mtani, Cotamoto	1895	Maiekesa	Mekela ng'ombe
	Azola	1900	Macaiya	
	Ngazaza (c)	1906	Mambonya	
	Ngaziaiya	1912	Mtetema	
	Ciwombola, Nganya	1914		Mekela
	Kalusilo, Msolokoto	1920	Gwaula	

[Footnotes on page 39]

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could assemble for hunting and fighting, similar to the sectors attached to chiefly villages among the Zulu.[8]

Women were organized into parallel age-sets, led by daughters of the royal line and other important young women. Men and women of corresponding sets danced together on ceremonial occasions, and among themselves women in a regiment used to fight 'to see who was strongest'. After marriage a woman ceased to participate actively in these regimental dances and fights.

The most important national festival was the first fruits ceremony held annually at the headquarters of Zwangendaba's great wife's segment. This was organized on an age-set basis, and there was much competitive dancing. Special songs were sung, and on conclusion of the ceremony a large national raid might be undertaken.

The Ngoni depended largely on the efficiency of their army for the continual inflow of captives on which the strength and continued existence of the State depended. The age-set system provided them with an efficient army, and in addition was a means whereby the centrifugal tendency inherent in their segmentary system was partly checked.

Each major segment had members in each regiment, and each regiment was drawn from every major segment. It provided the central authority with an instrument by which the segments could be held together, for on national raids the young men of every segment were in danger. No one segment, save the State itself, could claim the glory for a successful battle, but only the regiments involved. The Paramount Chief did not possess a complete monopoly of force, for we have already noted that sometimes segment heads organized their own raids. But these were small affairs,

[8] cf. Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu', p. 31.

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←^

(a) Mpezeni I's regiment. Lancaster says Mpezeni I was in Mayunge.
(b) Nsingu's regiment.
(c) Mpezeni II's regiment.
(d) Maola. Wiese and some of my informants support the earlier position; Lancaster and other of my informants support the later one.
(e) Maiyiza. Lancaster and one of my informants support the earlier position; a more reliable informant supports the later one.

Wiese gives two other regimental names. His Madouda or Madoda is merely the status term *madoda*, meaning 'mature, respected and important men'. His other regimental name, Madginga or Madjinga, is probably also a status term, meaning 'very old men'. Rangeley has the names Tatakulu, Mang'ombe, Izimpini, Makeke, Mahacu, Zimfezi, Manyoni.

Sources: twenty-three independent informants, offering partly conflicting accounts; Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 477, and 'Geschichte', p. 195; Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 82; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 59.

1 [Footnotes pertain to Table III, page 38, - Analyst]

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before it can be moved further. The same accumulation of snow then begins again with each fragment.

We can readily see that this system was one of great flexibility. The rules of the system were fairly definite, and the principles of agnatic descent and primogeniture were never violated. Yet it was a system very susceptible to manipulation, and one appropriate to a society with a rapidly expanding population recruited mainly by capture. The relationships between a man and his wives, his sons, and his other dependants provided the basis for differentiation within his segment, but they did not determine in advance which wife should be made leader of a bevy, which bevy should get most dependants, which of his younger sons he should favour, which dependants he would appoint as lieutenants.

Without a continual inflow of captives this wide pattern of segmentation might not have produced anything more than a lineage system on the same lines as the Zulu and Swazi. The captives were the bulk which swelled the segments, which benefited one segment at the expense of another. This system provided quasi-agnatic affiliation to people whose actual parentage was unknown or irrelevant. Because of this source of supply, much greater segmentation was achieved in each generation than was possible in an orthodox lineage system. The whole system lasted only seventy-seven years for the Fort Jameson group, corresponding roughly to three generations, yet almost the whole population of the Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba, numbering perhaps half a million people, could at the end of that time trace quasi-agnatic ascent back to him or his forebears.

Membership of age-sets gave rise to one set of bonds which cut across the lines of segmentary division; those bonds created by marriage gave rise to another. A man in one segment was linked by ties of affinity to men in several others, and because of these ties interacted with them on formal and informal occasions, exchanged cattle with them, and had a joint interest with them in their common descendants. Though segments were not exogamous, a wife from a structurally distant segment had in general a higher status and was more likely to be selected as leader of a bevy than was one from the same minor segment as her husband. Within a segment a son of the lord might marry the daughter of a lieutenant, and lieutenants sometimes married daughters of their lord, thus blending the bonds of affinity with those of quasi-agnation. As the heads of segments, married women played a more important role than we usually associate with them in strongly patrilineal societies. The lady of a segment retained her connexion with the segments

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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361 592 pattern covered two generations including the houses of the former chief and the reigning one.

The houses served several purposes in the organization of village life on the one hand, and on the other, provided an important instrument for regulating succession and inheritance, and for carrying out traditional ceremonies and ritual. It was the eldest son of the second house who would, if the *kusungulu* practice was followed, remain behind with the *gogo* village; and he was responsible for conducting traditional ritual and was expected to be able to carry out ceremonial procedure correctly. This was the main function of the *gogo* village and of the man who was head of the male members of the *gogo* house. The corresponding head of the male members of the big house was the owner of the village, and it was his eldest son by his first wife who would normally succeed him as chief or *mukumuzana*. The members of each house had a stake in the property of that house, particularly in the herd of cattle owned by it, and in any goods, such as cloth, bought by the sale of the cattle of the house. The house united the male members who belonged to it through this common ownership of cattle. In Chapter II of Part IV we shall examine further this aspect of belonging to a house.

554 592 562 In the organization of village life in villages belonging to chiefs or *akumuzana* the houses established the status of the wives of the owner of the village, and the status of those of his mothers who had come with him. His mother in the *indlunkulu* hut ranked first among her co-widows. The big wife came next, and the wife of the second house after her. Wives attached to the big house ranked above those attached to the second house.

571 592 627 562 The houses fulfilled their most prominent role in the day-to-day activities of the households associated with them. It was in these daily affairs and in planning for future events that the house organization provided the chief channels of authority. The exercise of this authority ranged from instruction in household tasks and emphasis on good standards of housekeeping to settling minor disputes arising from marital quarrels over property and over the custody of children. These minor cases could be settled out of court if the senior women showed that they knew how to listen to complaints and give advice which was accepted, with the result that good relations were restored. The main topics of discussion among the senior women on the verandah of the *indlunkulu* were the ingredients of these minor quarrels and disputes. If, by judicious handling, they could keep the cases out of court, they knew, and so did the village, that their authority was enhanced and their prestige more firmly established.

571 592 562 The authority of senior women was further reinforced through their organization of women's labour in household work and in cultivation. This authority in domestic affairs covered a woman's own household and the women and girls attached to it as household servants, the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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households of her co-wives who were junior to her in the house, and the households of her sons' wives. These women also decided when to undertake certain work in cultivation or in harvesting crops, when to brew beer, when to re-polish the floors of huts and the sitting place in front of the huts, when to replenish the stock of cloth, ornaments and beads, baskets and mats, which were part of the wealth of the house. Other occasions for the exercise of authority were attending and superintending women's confinements and the private puberty rite of the girls, advising on matters of health, and supervising the training of children.

All these activities of the owners of the houses were so much part of the day-to-day life of a village that they could pass almost unnoticed unless a detailed analysis were made. The position and authority of owners of houses was, however, immediately evident on ceremonial occasions. These included the pre-marriage ceremony of *umsindo*, which was abandoned after the Europeans came; the series of visits and exchanges leading up to the marriage ceremony, *mtimba*; brewing beer on a number of occasions, for dancing *ngoma* and *ligubo*, for funerals and subsequent ritual shaving, or for entertaining important visitors whose coming was expected so that beer could be prepared in advance. On all such occasions, the courtyard surrounding the *indlunkulu* was a scene of great activity. Men put on their war-dance equipment there; the beer pots were assembled there; meat and blood for feasts were cooked there, while the less important maize porridge (*nsima*) was cooked in subordinate households. From the courtyard of the *indlunkulu* a procession of the *manina* (senior women) led by the owner of the house went out to greet visitors, to go to the beer drink, to take part in the dances, and to perform the ritual connected with births, deaths and marriages.

Marriage in Ngoni Society

Earlier in this chapter it was said that a new house derived from the marriage of a leading man to his big wife. Since marriage was so closely linked with the continuance and development of houses, and since a new wife when married separated from her own mother's house and became a member of her husband's mother's house, I have included a discussion of marriage in this chapter on houses.

There were three main principles in Ngoni marriage. It was a binding contract sealed by the exchange of cattle; it established succession in the male line; it formed a link between leading Swazi clans. When we examine in detail the organization of Ngoni marriage we see that its objectives were to build up a series of inter-clan and inter-family relationships. These began with inter-marriage between the leading Swazi clans, in order to strengthen the political and social relationships within that inner circle of Ngoni society. The political allegiance of leading individuals from clans of non-Swazi origin was strengthened by marriage

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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visits or on special occasions. In the central kingdom, where an important man's sisters often married in the village and stayed there, it was evident that they often exercised authority over their brother's children.

In polygynous Ngoni families the relationship between siblings was marked by strong attachment. Among the boys in the *laweni* brothers united to protect their younger brothers from other boys, and in the families of Swazi clans brothers showed many signs of youthful intolerance and arrogance towards boys of other clans, especially in matters concerning cattle and their herding. Sibling rivalry among boys was to a large extent controlled by two factors. One was the *laweni* system where the age-set principle predominated. The other was the division into the big house and *gogo* house, where the children of the *gogo* house knew that they stood in a different relationship to succession and authority in the village from their brothers and sisters in the big house. Within the big house itself, sons of the big wife knew that succession was regulated by seniority, and that the eldest son would expect to get priority when he married and it was necessary to allot cattle for *lobola*. The brother-sister link between children of the same mother was, as we have seen, a very close one, especially with the older sister of a man who was heir to a high position. This sister in her relation to his children carried almost the same authority as he did. Among sisters of the same family there was less apparent cohesion, except among very high-ranking Swazi clans where the girl children were looked after by special nursemaids and had their instruction in correct behaviour together from the older woman known as their *gogo*.

Ngoni grandparents on the paternal side showed little of the joking relationship with their grandchildren sometimes associated with this tie. When children went to visit their maternal grandparents in another village there was noticeably more ease between them and more indulgence was shown. In their father's village children were always aware that his parents were persons of standing and authority. Girls over six or seven often slept in their paternal grandmother's hut if she was a widow, and were aware that, though she showed kindliness in providing for their needs, she was a firm disciplinarian in all matters of behaviour.

Within the family group the male role of leadership was unquestioned. Honour and respect were a man's due from wives as well as from children. In difficult relations within his family, as in the case of divorce, he could count on counsel and support from his brothers, who were also ready to help him if cattle were needed for his own or his son's marriage or for payment of court penalties. This male circle of father and sons, father's brothers and their sons, was a closely knit group which functioned in regulating family affairs and in buying and selling cattle for the house to which they belonged. An obligation to help his sons was recognized by the father of a family and this obligation

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extended to his brothers' sons, especially if their father was dead. Following the same pattern, a man's sons who were away at work sent back money to their father who bought cattle with it, or spent it as the sons asked. It was clear in the 1930's that Ngoni men rarely sent money directly to their wives, though they frequently asked their father to give money to their wives and to buy for them cloth or needed household equipment.

Within the larger orbit of the male family responsibilities women had their more restricted but clearly defined sphere. At a woman's confinement she was looked after by her husband's own mother, aided by his other mothers and by his sisters if they were present in the village. At the 'coming out' of the new member of the family, ten to fourteen days after birth, the woman and the baby, bathed and ritually cleansed, were seated on a mat outside the hut and presented to the male members of the father's family who gave small gifts to the baby. If it was a boy, the father's mother generally carried it to the gate of the kraal where the men were sitting, to present it to them as one who would eventually herd the cattle. On this occasion, or soon after, the child's name was chosen, usually by the father's father, who prepared and gave to the mother a calf-skin or goat-skin for carrying the child in. The meat of the animal was cooked by the father's mother and a small feast was held for the father's mothers, sisters, brothers and their wives, and any others of the father's family who had helped in the confinement.[1] After the child had thus been acknowledged in its father's family circle, the mother took the baby to visit her own family, who also gave it presents.

During the rearing of the child, its father's female relatives assumed responsibility for giving the young mother advice. The father's mother was expected to note the stage at which the child should be weaned, always if possible before the mother's next pregnancy. If the father's mother was unobservant, the other senior women of the husband's family would rebuke her and say 'Look now you are foolish because the child has been endangered. You are like an enemy to it.' These women then took the initiative and insisted on weaning the child. They said to the baby's mother 'We want to wean the child.' They made a paste of ground chillies and put it on the mother's breasts and covered them with a skin or cloth. The child was taken from her after it had tried to suck and had been refused, and given to the father's mother or sister, who looked after it with the help of a nursemaid. It was fed on cow's milk, *amasi* (milk curds), and gruel.

The publicity given to the weaning and the initiative taken by the senior women of the husband's family were intended to inform others in the village that the parents were now free to have another child. This was one aspect of the old Ngoni form of family planning and, in describing

[1] This feast was also held when a carrying cloth was given instead of a skin.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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were clearly defined aims in this care of girls after puberty, including instruction in personal hygiene and in pre-marital sexual relations. A girl's father's sisters and her own mother wanted to be able to say, when marriage negotiations began: *Ngombe zake zidzala*, 'her cattle are full', which was the comment made when girls were examined periodically to see if they were still virgin. To achieve this they constantly said to her: '*Mudziunge, mudziletse*', 'take care of yourself, control yourself'; and the *gogo* explained to the girl how she could protect herself. In one area where I lived, the chief's daughter was examined every week, with her *isidandani* or companions, and the girls who helped in the big house were examined every month. The strict behaviour required of Ngoni girls of good family was expected also of those of the same age who were members of the same household, either appointed to be with them as companions or as servants in the big house.

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Looking forward to marriage involved not only preservation of her virginity. An Ngoni girl going to a strange village had to know how to perform women's work in the home, how to do it herself as well as how to direct others, and she had to be carefully trained in that meticulous and exclusive social behaviour required of Ngoni women of good family. She might be going to marry a man who intended to 'marry up', in which case she might be thought in one sense to be 'marrying below her station'. Yet her personal position as a member of her father's clan and family could not be altered by her marriage, and she was well aware that she was conferring something on the man and on the family she married into.

● [562]

While the boys were learning their roles in later life in the democratic atmosphere of the *laweni* and of the boys' pursuits in the village, the girls in the later stage of their training after puberty were treated more individually, and were not left to find their level in a group of their age mates. The adult women took an active part in telling them how to behave, how to dress and how to cook. The girls of high-ranking families sometimes pounded maize with their age mates, singing as they did so, but more for fun than because their food depended on it. They learned to dress their hair and put on clothes, and to walk and dance in company with other girls, but always with the critical eye of their *gogo* upon them. Their lower-ranking companions could make mistakes and be careless, and walk and dance in an exaggerated fashion. Ngoni girls might never pass certain bounds of decorum, and the standard expected of them was high and exacting. I have heard *manina* of leading clans scold young girls many times for careless behaviour and badly done work.

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In this training, as throughout that of the boys, there was a deliberate preparation for leadership. A girl's character and ability were being watched and, while an awareness of her personal dignity and position was being fostered, it was accompanied by requirements of obedience

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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and docility, especially to older women. This last was intended to stand her in good stead when she went to be married in a strange village and would be expected to show subservience to her mother-in-law. At the same time, since the girl belonged to a high-ranking clan, she knew, and so did those who were training her, that she would eventually have to exercise authority and teach others what to do and show them how to do it. She would also be expected to have a mind of her own and to speak out on occasions to her husband and, when she grew older, to rebuke women in her house or in her service if they did anything amiss.

In pre-European days, between the private puberty ritual and her marriage, the Ngoni girl went through another ceremony, the *umsindo*. This was a pre-marriage rite, and was in many instances followed almost immediately by marriage. It was held for girls of high-ranking families, though their companions from their own and other villages shared in the ritual. The ceremony was abandoned after the missionaries came, but many of the songs and the dances were well-known to the leading Ngoni women. I saw many *umsindo* dances in the northern and central kingdoms and collected a number of the songs which were still in use, some sung to solo instruments, such as the *igubu*, and others sung at funerals or at tribal gatherings. Those *umsindo* songs which referred to sexual intercourse and used expressions which were considered obscene, had been sung only at the ceremony itself. The Ngoni made a practice of referring to genital organs and to sexual intercourse in veiled language. As soon as the meaning of the terms became obvious, they were disguised by other allusive terms. The degree of obscenity in the actual words of songs was therefore very difficult to establish, but Ngoni informants were always clear about which could be sung in public and which only on occasions of licence or strictly in private.

The *umsindo* ceremony as a preliminary to marriage fulfilled certain functions. It was a public declaration that the girl for whom it was held had been examined and found to be a virgin, for it was not held for anyone who had been deflowered in earlier love affairs. It emphasized the social rank and the wealth of the girl's father, for only rich and important men could afford to hold *umsindo* for their daughters. It had a strong element of a *rite de passage* in it, for the girls were secluded in a hut during most of the ceremony, they fasted, they were given instruction by older women, and they were finally 'brought out' of the hut and adorned with parts of the beasts slaughtered, and with beads given as presents by friends and relatives. Perhaps the chief significance of the *umsindo* was the fact that it was a ceremony held for the girl in her father's village. It was an assertion of her membership in her own family and village circle, and of her father's status and of his regard for her. There is no doubt that the Ngoni women of high rank had a keen sense of their own importance and position; the *umsindo* ceremony

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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women's. For all ceremonies the men sat on the right side, and the women on the left, the place of honour for the leading man and woman being by the main door-posts. No young man or woman ever thought of sitting near them. The other place of significance lay between the fire and the back of the hut on the right-hand side; it was known as the 'place of the spirits', the 'ancestors' corner', where the baskets and spears and other ritual objects were kept which were used in the ancestral cult. Only the owner of the hut or those taking part in the ritual could approach this corner.

In this land, into the cultural pattern of Ngoni village and household life, the Ngoni children were born. In such villages and homes they passed their earlier years, and grew from boys and girls to young adults.

The Ngoni kingdoms

When the Ngoni made parts of Nyasaland their homeland they set up conquest states on the pattern which they had been familiar with in southern Africa. Where they settled, they either conquered the local peoples who lived in that area, or accepted their submission. Until the British administration was established the Ngoni carried on wars and raids against neighbouring peoples to enlarge the boundaries of their kingdoms. As a conquest state, similar to that of the Ndebele in Southern Rhodesia, the population of the Ngoni kingdoms was of mixed origin, some whose ancestors came from Natal, some from the territories passed through on their northward march, and some from Nyasaland itself.

The kingdoms were organized on a centralized pattern with the Paramount Chief as supreme ruler and subordinate chiefs under him. The Ngoni code of law operated in the courts of the chiefs, and, as they proudly said, 'there was one law for all people'. Military service was required from all young men, and each territorial chief had to bring his quota of warriors to the Paramount's village when a war summons went out. Military service, obedience to the law,

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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186 563 621 in the village, whom they regarded as inferior not only because they had been conquered, but because they disliked and despised their way of living. This sense of separateness from and of superiority to the non-Ngoni elements in the villages had its counterpart in the close ties which existed with Ngoni families in other villages. These ties were reinforced socially by 'dynastic' or inter-clan marriages, and politically through the hierarchy of courts and officials leading up to the Paramount's court and entourage.

[582] [631]

565 621 [183] [177] The Ngoni aristocracy endeavoured to maintain their traditional ways of living and of bringing up their children in the face of changes creeping in from the non-Ngoni elements in the village, as well as from external European influences. The maintenance of Ngoni ways of living and cultural patterns of behaviour depended on three main elements in village society. One was the degree of integration between the Ngoni men in their house groups and in village society as a whole. This was most evident in chiefs' villages, and in the villages belonging to the heads of clans. The second element was the number of wives of true Ngoni families who had married into the village, thus combining the influence of husband and wife, or rather of father and mother, in bringing up children on the Ngoni pattern. The third element was the number and influence of senior women of Ngoni families, either wives of older men in the village, or widows of former leaders. This senior women's group, many of whom were addressed as 'mother' by the Ngoni fathers of young families, were a formidable force in maintaining tradition, by advising their sons, coercing their daughters-in-law, and holding on to their authority at every stage of the children's development.

[562] [593] [606]

Life in two Ngoni villages

121 [114] I am going briefly to sketch in, as a general background for the following chapters, the main features of two villages, in one of which I lived for several months, in the other for a few weeks.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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III

'A New Stranger has come'

In these words the father's mother announced from the door of the hut that a child had been born. From inside the hut the women assisting the mother at the time of delivery had given a single cry if it was a boy and two cries for a girl. If the birth had been delayed till late afternoon towards sunset, the women in the hut said to the mother, if it was a boy: 'See the baby has been awaiting the return of the cattle, because it is he who will tend the cattle.'

The new baby was at first regarded as a stranger, born by a woman who had herself come to the village as a stranger when she married. In later years, when speaking of his parents, the child would say: 'X is my father, and I am of the womb of A, and G and H they are my brother and my sister of one womb.' This particularization of a full brother and sister was used to correct the extended use of the kinship terms, and also to convey the idea that having been born from the womb of one woman gave children a special relationship important in Ngoni thinking.

Preparation for birth

When an Ngoni wife was aware that she was pregnant she did not say anything to her husband, and indeed endeavoured to conceal her condition from him as long as possible, continuing the normal sleeping arrangements and intercourse. Ngoni women liked to assert their authority and ascendancy on those occasions, and therefore excluded the men from knowledge of the coming event and from all preparations for it. The senior women used to say, 'Men are

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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843 593 562 little children. They are not able to hear those things which belong to pregnancy.' The men on their part accepted the role of being ignorant of what was coming, though they were generally aware of it. It was an elaborate piece of role-playing, standardized by custom, emphasizing the separation of the men's and women's worlds in Ngoni life, and giving control and authority into the experienced hands of the senior women.

843 606 572 The Ngoni culture pattern forbade the wife to tell her mother-in-law herself about her condition. She had, as so often in the Ngoni pattern, to approach first a friend who was her confidante, who might be another young wife or a helper in the household. This friend had to tell her mother-in-law, the future paternal grandmother of the baby, who was destined to play a big part in the child's upbringing.

During the months of pregnancy a Ngoni woman carried on with her normal work in the household, including cooking for her husband. If she feared a miscarriage, and suffered from what was called 'a shaking inside', she stayed quietly in the hut, and, saying that she had a headache, asked her husband to call her friend. Then the friend told the mother-in-law who sent for a 'doctor' to bring medicines 'to make the inside not shake'. A young Ngoni woman did not expect

843 152 to have miscarriages, and feared that her husband's relatives would blame her home for not giving her enough food before marriage to make her strong and healthy in child-bearing.

The fear of invidious comparisons with her own home and upbringing also operated when the wife felt herself near to labour. She would keep on working up to the last minute, for if she told her friend that her time was come, and the friend summoned the senior women, they came to examine her. Should they find on examination that she was not about to deliver, they looked at her and said, 'What are you afraid of? Did you call us for fear?' The young wife was ashamed of being thought fearful, both for her own reputation and

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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IV

Family Life for the Young Child

The women's world

It was the proud boast of the Ngoni aristocrats that their women did no 'work' in the old days. When they spoke thus they were equating 'work' with physical labour, sweeping and cleaning in the hut and compound, fetching wood and water, hoeing in the gardens, and the routine part of preparing and cooking food. The Ngoni women of the former large households had an army of 'helpers' to do all these tasks for them. Though the number of helpers dwindled as the larger households disappeared, the pattern of appropriation of tasks remained in the shrunken households, and hence the Ngoni women were always responsible for a high degree of household management. Larger households in the old days fed fifty to sixty people from their cooking-pots, and though when I lived among them the scale of their households was much smaller, some were still feeding twenty and more people for each meal, apart from the occasional meals served when kinsfolk and strangers came unexpectedly.

I never failed to be impressed with the quiet dignified competence with which Ngoni women managed their household affairs. They did it with an apparent effortlessness, which had its roots in long training and tradition, and in an awareness of responsibility that increased, but weighed less heavily, with age and experience. This competence was always apparent on occasions such as wedding feasts. Then cereal food, meat, vegetable relishes were cooked in vast quantities and served out to the separate groups of guests.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

562 These skills of management, and of order and dignity in
461 serving, were not however only seen in large-scale operations.
592 The modern young Ngoni wife serving tea and 'scones' to her husband's guests sitting on his veranda showed the same qualities of careful preparation and considerate service as her grandmother had shown presiding over 500 guests at a wedding feast.

562 Household management in Ngoni homes included primarily managing the household staff, allotting their tasks to them, settling their quarrels, looking after them when sick, marrying off the young ones when the time came. In the all-important aspect of feeding a large household and its dependents, Ngoni women assumed responsibility for seeing that there were enough supplies of different kinds of food at hand, for regular consumption and for emergencies. They consulted at times with the 'official' who was in charge of their 'house' about mobilizing supplies or organizing women helpers to cultivate in the gardens. Most significant in the eyes of Ngoni and non-Ngoni alike was the task of Ngoni
[264] women of 'dividing the food' at every meal-time. It was a key concept in Ngoni culture that at all times when food, beer, or other kinds of goods were to be divided out, and enjoyed or used by a large number of people, the 'one who divided' was an important individual. He, or more often she, must be of 'good character', who assumed, or was given, the task because he or she knew how to do it, and no one questioned the justice or the competence with which the dividing was done. Again I was impressed by the almost nonchalant air with which Ngoni women ladled out food
[461] for a large number of individuals and groups. It looked so easy. It was obviously not a simple matter. The results were always accepted and welcomed, and I never heard any grumbles.

593 Central to the organization of the household, and in one
592 sense the axis on which it revolved, was the care and attention the wife gave to her husband. Cooking, including the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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choice and variety of food, was primarily to please him, and 593
to meet the incessant claims on his hospitality when visitors 592
came. A well-ordered and harmonious household also pleased
him, and conversely the sounds of women quarrelling an- [183]
gered him and violated his canons of accepted Ngoni be-
haviour. It was his wife's task to supervise the household 357
helpers, who were mostly non-Ngoni, and to make them
conform to Ngoni patterns by controlling their rages, instead 592
of yelling at each other and hurling accusations of witchcraft
at those with whom they were angry.

Ngoni women also took a serious view of another aspect of 562
pleasing their husbands, namely attention to their person and 593
dress. The old elaborate hair-dressing of Ngoni women, the 302
scrupulous washing of their bodies with sweet-smelling leaves, 515
the use of oil and clarified butter on the skin and hair, and 901
the careful tying and draping of cloths and arranging of
bead headbands and necklaces—these all were forms of
beauty treatment and personal hygiene designed to please
the husband. They also reinforced the self-respect and author- [565]
ity of well-born Ngoni women, marking them out by their
well-groomed appearance from the 'workers' and 'helpers'
who surrounded them.

The young Ngoni child, up to the age of six or seven, grew 602
up in a women's world of the kind just described. His mother 855
was learning from his paternal grandmother the increasing [606]
duties and responsibilities of an Ngoni wife, although she
was supposed to have learned some of them in her own home
from her mother before marriage. We saw in Chapter II how
the social horizons of a small Ngoni child were never of a
narrow type, restricted to his individual family. The care of
a child, especially between the time of weaning and the
coming of second teeth, was the concern of a number of
women in addition to his own mother, from whom he was
snatched away at weaning, and, for a time at least, kept
away from her household for eating and sleeping.

Among the female population of a village most nearly [561]

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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855 primarily within his mother's household, but also, and especially immediately after weaning, in his grandmother's household. His needs for food and warmth could in fact be met in any of the households which formed part of his father's house and family group. There was no greater contrast for the small boy about the age of seven between this kind of life in the women's compound and his plunge into the life of the boys' dormitory.

The father's role with young children

562 During day-time in Ngoni villages Ngoni men and women lived almost in two separate worlds, the women in their compounds, the men by the kraal gate or about the village. When important visitors arrived the veranda of the 'big house' be- 574 came a general meeting-place. Chiefs and leading men who [342] had acquired chairs, among other modern household furni- [177] ture, preferred to entertain their guests on their own veranda [352] where they had some degree of privacy, and to offer them chairs to sit on instead of the kraal fence to lean against. This 512 use of chairs which they found more comfortable to sit on brought many of the fathers of families back to their own [264] verandas now and then during the day, though they con- [521] tinued to eat their meals with the other men at the kraal gate, and to go there to discuss village affairs and watch over the coming and going of the cattle.

593 This change of habit brought the fathers of families into closer touch with their young children, and it was accele- [177] rated by the growing Christian tradition in which fathers were more closely associated with certain aspects of their children's upbringing. It was the father who arranged for the baptism [851] of the children which took place in the local church and was a ceremony attended by most of the village, whether Christians or not. When an evangelist or a school-teacher con- [782] ducted evening prayers, as they often did near the kraal where anyone could come after the evening meal, Christian fathers sometimes carried a child in their arms to the prayers.

sieves for straining beer or water poured through ashes to make salt. These lay around all day if they were being used, and were periodically scrubbed and put on the rack to dry, and at night stacked tidily in the veranda. In the day-time sleeping-mats of finely woven fibre were brought out into the sun, and so were skins and cloths used as coverings at night. Some of the Ngoni used curved wooden headrests as pillows often carved at the ends with animals' heads to fascinate a small child.

On the polished space in front of the hut were laid from time to time mats on which sprouting millet for making beer was dried, or partly pounded damp maize. A young child was sometimes told to keep the fowls and dogs off these mats. These animals and often small kids, wandered and pecked and scratched and quarrelled inside the fence all day, and young children chased them.

Beyond the fence lay other fenced compounds grouped round the cattle kraal, and beyond the village buildings lay patches of woodland, grass pastures, cultivated 'gardens', and water-holes and streams. Going with the mother or grandmother or a nurse girl or helper to fetch water, or work in the gardens was an expedition for young children which they delighted in.

In these village surroundings there were some places forbidden to young children, who were corrected by everyone with smacks and stern reproofs until they learned to keep away. One such forbidden place was the kraal gateway where the men sat and talked and ate. No woman until she had passed the menopause was allowed to cross over in front of the gateway lest she injure the cattle. If therefore children strayed down there, younger women did not like to go and fetch them back, as the men always grumbled if women went there lest they should harm the cattle. It was nevertheless a place that had a great attraction for boys of five to seven years old, because they found their fathers there and the herd boys. The boys in this age-group of five to seven showed

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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the qualities required in self-defence and in mutual aid which he would need when, at the age of eighteen or so, he was called up into the new regiment formed by the Paramount. Dormitory life was therefore rooted in the Ngoni past and though its original purpose and outcome had disappeared with the suppression of tribal wars, it was still part of the organization for herding cattle and was regarded as a necessary training ground for young manhood. In very large villages there was more than one dormitory, each placed in a section of the village surrounding a cattle kraal. Boys belonged to the dormitory of that section where their parents' household was situated. There were occasional attempts sponsored by certain missions to set up a separate dormitory for boys who were baptized Christians or in an inquirers' class. This kind of separation was greatly disliked by the Ngoni on the grounds that they did not want anything to divide their people. They regarded dormitory life as an important co-ordinating factor in their young peoples' development, and they did not want the tradition to be spoiled. They therefore opposed any sectionalizing of the dormitory system except on the geographical lines already mentioned, which allowed for the full operation of the two remaining purposes of the dormitory in Ngoni culture.

The first of these purposes was to remove boys, once they had their second teeth, from the influence of the women. Ngoni men were outspoken in condemning the effects of all women's influence on boys. They made a slight exception in favour of the mothers and grandmothers of high-ranking Ngoni clans. Non-Ngoni women they always suspected, and often rightly, of introducing youths and girls to ideas and practices which were contrary to Ngoni custom, particularly in connexion with sex and magic. It was partly a belief that dormitory life would 'Ngoni-ize' the boys and counteract non-Ngoni influences from whatever source that made them so unyielding about boys leaving the women's supervision at what they considered a crucial stage.

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872 go herding. School was sometimes regarded as an easy option where you sat still all day and repeated things after the [875] teacher. This was far from being the case in a village like Enkodlweni where the headmaster was well trained and kept the boys on their toes. In such schools the boys themselves were enthusiastic about learning, and regarded going to school as a dignified and worth-while occupation, and not a childish amusement.

Girls' life in the village

858 When the girls had their second teeth and were acknowledged to have reached the new stage in their development, there was no abrupt transition for them, as for their brothers, from the household circle to the dormitory, or from the women's world to the men's world. They continued as part of the women's world; they changed their occupations and their daily routine on the whole very little; and they went on sleeping in the hut of a widowed aunt or grandmother. All that was said however in the earlier part of the chapter about accountability for their behaviour was as true as for the boys.

561 The Ngoni girls of leading families formed a distinct group, [565] called in the age-set terms 'children' until they were about eleven and then 'immature girls' until they reached puberty. There was in Ngoni thought and practice a clear division between immature and mature girls, and we shall see what this involved in girls' life in Chapters VI and VII. The age-set terms used to distinguish between children and immature girls did not imply any real differences in ways of living, manners and occupations. The girls between about seven and fourteen were looked on as belonging to a 'girls' circle', and this girls' circle had certain distinctive features.

561 In the first place the tendency of the girls to draw apart
562 from the boys of their own age, already evident before the
535 coming of the second teeth, was now more or less complete
628 with the boys' withdrawal into dormitory life and their preoccupation with herding. Later, about the age of twelve

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or thirteen, the girls began to take part in *ngoma* dances with the boys. This was on a village basis and organized with a view to competition with other villages. In practising such dancing, as we shall see later, the girls were often by themselves, though when getting ready for a competition they joined with the boys' group.

The Ngoni girls' circle was to some extent split into the households to which the girls belonged. There was no common residence or common eating-place for all the group, to correspond with the boys' dormitory and eating together at the kraal gate. Generally the girls continued to eat in their mothers' compound with their own younger brothers and sisters. They sometimes ate with the widowed aunt or grandmother with whom they slept, but the other practice was more common. This meant that Ngoni girls who bore the clan name of their father continued to live in the compound of their mother who might not be of a high-ranking Ngoni clan. In such cases the grandmother and the father's elder sister kept a sharp eye on the training and deportment of the girl.

The Ngoni girls' circle was an exclusive group. Unlike the dormitory where all village boys mixed up, the Ngoni girls, in virtue of bearing their father's clan name, tended to remain as a distinctive group. They were members of their father's house until they married; and when that took place it was they who could cause cattle to flow into the herd belonging to that house. It was partly for this reason, the transfer of cattle, that the Ngoni women of that house, particularly the grandmother, watched closely the bringing up of the girls from the second teeth stage onward. If she thought the training of the girl was unsatisfactory, because of the carelessness or doubtful character of the girl's own mother, the grandmother might discuss with the girl's father the advisability of arranging for the girl to be adopted into another household or into a collateral house. The reason for this was that when marriage negotiations began and the prospective parents-in-law made inquiries about the girl's character and

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When the Ngoni talked about the separate ideal personalities of men and women, they emphasized the training needed for younger men, and to some extent also for younger women. Senior men and women were expected to possess special qualities due to their age and status and experience. It was recognized that the limited responsibilities of young men before marriage gave them little authority in village and family affairs. Since each family however was bringing up its girls to leave them on marriage and to take the good name of the family elsewhere, there was less distinction made between the qualities desired in younger married women and older ones than there was between the two groups of men.

The ideal personality of Ngoni women

This had four main aspects: physical capacity and appearance, relationship to her husband and his relatives, competence in household management, and general reputation for justice and wisdom.

We talked in Chapter III about the connexion in Ngoni thinking between women being healthy and strong and being able to bear healthy children. In the marriage negotiations and even at the final ceremony itself in the bridegroom's village, there were formalized standard questions put by the bridegroom's representatives about the health of the girl and her family, and these were replied to also in conventional phrases. Such inquiries about health had been made secretly long before the final ceremony, and indeed before any formal approaches had been made which led to the betrothal. But the fact that they were made in public on two distinct occasions, at the preliminary visit of the man's representatives and at the marriage itself, underlined the importance of health and its relation to child-bearing capacity in the ideal Ngoni woman.

We saw in the last chapter that physical strength for continuous hard manual work in the household and in the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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wife. We have talked in Chapters IV and VII of her duties in organizing food supplies, supervising cooking, and that supreme test of competence: dividing out the food so that all had a fair share. The same high standard of skill was expected in the general care and supervision of the compound, the children and the household staff. Ngoni women, like their menfolk, were proud of being able to supervise other people and organize life around them, to control others satisfactorily, to hear complaints and to pacify quarrels. The proverb 'The tooth laughs to no purpose', meaning that angry people show their teeth but with no merriment, was often heard when Ngoni women intervened to stop two quarrelling girls or to prevent an irate helper getting angry with the nurse girls.

The traits of justice and wisdom were important elements in the foundation of a Ngoni married woman's reputation. These were judged by her ability to allocate fair shares of food to servants and helpers, and to adjudicate wisely in women's disputes. Two proverbs referred particularly to dividing out food and were said about women who were either careless or stingy, and did not give their helpers a fair share. 'The finger-nails are surfeited' meant that the important people had eaten heartily without thought for others; and 'She has sliced one side only' had the same connotation, that those who had the supplies were keeping too much for themselves. Two other proverbs drove home this principle of *noblesse oblige* when emphasizing the responsibilities of married women: 'The elephant is not made heavy by its trunk,' and 'If the cows do not produce milk the herdsman is responsible.'

The ideal personality of Ngoni men

As we have just said, there was a definite personality pattern for young men whether married or not, which emphasized special qualities looked for in them, since on the whole they had relatively little authority or responsibility in village

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affairs. Boys and young men were expected to be physically strong, and tough in the sense of being able to do hard tasks, walk long distances, dance for hours on end, and put up with hardships without grumbling. The senior men, as we saw earlier in this chapter hated to see idleness and set great store by young men working hard and persistently at any tasks undertaken. Several proverbs illustrated this quality and were used with effect when boys were found hanging round in the village doing nothing: 'Loitering eats the owner,' 'Laziness is eating dung,' 'The garden will not be tilled if you stop hoeing it.'

Other qualities desired in young men were all connected with the values of staying together as a family and as a village group, and of fostering mutual aid and trust within the groups of males in the dormitory and in the 'house'. It was believed that they ought to be acutely sensitive to the opinion of their contemporaries, a lesson which they learned from early days in the dormitory. To an insensitive person, showing intolerance and hard-heartedness they said: 'Were you made with dog's bones?' for dogs' bones were thought to be hard and unfeeling; or, 'You have a heart like a crocodile.' A fear of social ostracism was fostered all the time and expressed in the proverb: 'The bird eats in his own field.'

There were innumerable proverbs about willingness to co-operate in all the necessary tasks which fell to the young men, such as communal hoeing described in Chapter VII, or digging the grave at a funeral. 'The eyes for seeing,' 'One arm cannot crush a louse,' 'A river grows by its little streams,' 'The heifer grows by giving it more food'—these and many others were used to admonish those who held back and to encourage those who joined in willingly. Other proverbs warned against promises of help which were not kept. 'You will eat those of the axe but not those of the hoe' was said to someone who had counted on noisy assertions of forthcoming help, like the sounds made by the chopping of an axe, and not in quiet persistent help, like the smooth almost silent

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463 foreman in charge of gangs of workers. All this last group
177 involved the earning, spending and sharing of money in-
[434] comes, but even more important in Ngoni eyes, they offered
[571] opportunities of exercising authority, and of controlling and directing others.

In local government and in the courts, which formed an
624 integral part of it, the qualities demanded were wisdom,
693 ability to make decisions, expert knowledge of the law, skill in conducting cases and in summing up evidence, and knowledge of the people, so that their reactions to new measures and to difficult court decisions could be forecast. Certain
[827] women were thought of as inheriting this kind of judicial
[562] ability and were often turned to in private by their husbands, sons or brothers and asked to declare themselves in support of or against an important decision and to discuss its merits or demerits.

In choosing a successor to a chief the regents who were
622 responsible for the selection looked for particular qualities of individual character as well as for evidence of the ideal Ngoni personality traits. Men who by right of inheritance could have succeeded their father were sometimes passed over because they showed characteristics which would make them a bad chief. This was one of the reasons why sons of leading men were watched so closely and corrected so sharply by the elders of a village who were noting their adjustment to the basic personality pattern as well as their individual character.

There were certain acknowledged ritual activities which demanded of the performer both a high degree of conformity to Ngoni personality patterns and special individual characteristics. On the death of a chief one of his sons or brothers was designated to become head of the 'elder' village which remained behind, when the new chief with some of the members of his father's 'house' moved out to found a new village. The 'one who stayed behind' as he was called was expected to be the epitome of all Ngoni qualities, and to have a good memory for, and an understanding of, Ngoni tradi-

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APPENDIX

HOUSE, HUT, HOUSEHOLD, house is used in this book for the Ngoni system of grouping round the leading women who were wives or mothers of the head of the village. Hut is used for the actual building. Household is used for a group of huts within a compound, (See diagrams in Chapter IV. See also Ngoni of Nyasaland page 122). 128 562 592

PATRILOCAL), refers to residence of young couple after marriage 591

MATRILOCAL), —sometimes called virilocal and uxorilocal.

CLASSIFICATORY KINSHIP TERMS, extension of use of father, mother, brother, sister etc. to wide range of relatives. 601

PARALLEL COUSINS, children of father's brothers or mother's sisters—regarded as brothers and sisters and called such.

CROSS COUSINS, children of father's sisters or mother's brothers—with whom marriage was possible. [582]

AGE-SETS, the special Ngoni terms are given in 'Ngoni of Nyasaland' page 144. 561

all children: *abantwana* 104

young men: *amajaha*

young girls before puberty: *inkakazana*

young girls after puberty: *izintombi*

III

VERNACULAR TERMS 104

AKULU	the important people
ALEZI	nursemaids
GOGO	grandparent or any very senior person
HLONIPA	respect
INDLUNKULU	chief hut in a village
INDUNA	official in village
IZIDANDANI	girl attendants
LAWENI	boys' dormitory
MWINI	owner—of a hut, cattle, dance group

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Mpezeni

842 595 woman, who was sometimes a younger sister or a junior father's daughter. This woman then became a linked co-wife (*nshanzi*)[7] subordinate to her barren sister. If the linked wife was also barren then the man could demand another one. The barren woman was never sent back to her own relatives but continued to live with her husband. Children of the linked wife were allocated to her and she 587 became responsible for their upbringing. Similarly if a wife died before she had borne a child a linked co-wife replaced her.

842 837 If the man was sterile he used to arrange for a friend to sleep secretly with his wife so that she should conceive. The friend was rewarded with a beast after a child had been born but the reason for making the reward was kept secret. If a seedraiser was caught he was killed for committing adultery, despite the fact of his having been called in by the husband.[8]

837 684 As well as being fertile, wives were expected to be chaste. On this point the evidence is clear. Wiese states that adulterers were always killed;[9] all subsequent writers have agreed with him. I was told that if the woman's husband was not an important person he was sometimes placated with a present of cattle. If the husband persisted in referring the matter to the chief the senior lieutenants of the chief might intercede on his behalf, if this was the man's first offence. Otherwise the man and the woman were both killed by one of the senior lieutenants.

567 [831] The approved mode of behaviour for women was chastity before marriage, submission in the choice of husband, and fertility and fidelity in marriage. These obligations were clear-cut and definite and of universal applicability. The obligations of affines towards 602 one another were not so straightforward, and their fulfilment was a process marked by ritual transfers of cattle and carefully prescribed modes of behaviour. In particular the relationship of a man to his 606 wife's mother was altered progressively from one of strict avoidance to openly expressed friendliness. The stages in the process represented the gradual acceptance of the man into the family of his wife's parents as a son-in-law, the father of their daughter's children.

586 [584] Marriage was entered into without compulsion on either side, but the right to terminate it was held in the man's group alone. A woman could not on any ground secure a divorce. All my informants agreed on this point. A man could divorce his wife at any time by sending her back to her own kinsfolk, giving her a small present as an indication that he had divorced her. If he had offered bridewealth for her, her kinsfolk were under an obligation to provide him with a

[7] Read, in her 'Moral code', p. 18 translates this word (*nhlanzi*) as 'substitute'. Lancaster, 'Tentative chronology', p. 79, gives the word as *nshlanze*. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 39 translates the Swazi word *inhlanti* as 'subordinate co-wife'. I have chosen the translation 'linked co-wife' as there are other kinds of subordinate co-wife who are not *nshanzi*, and some *nshanzi* are not substitutes.

[8] See below, p. 34.

[9] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedicao . . .', p. 471, and 'Geschichte . . .', pp. 189-90.

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made with the approval of the dead man's kin. Although by this arrangement the woman was for a while removed from her allotted place in the system, the *status quo ante* was restored with the return of the children to their pater's kinsmen.

8. Segmentation

The primary cleavage among a man's children was between the children of one band and the children of another. Within a band, the division was into separate 'houses'. Where there were children of more than one mother in the same 'house', that is where the senior wife as well as the linked wife had borne children or where there was more than one fertile linked co-wife with the same senior, the division was between the groups of full siblings. These lines of cleavage were expressed spatially by the arrangements of the huts belonging to each segment. At the top of the political hierarchy, the arrangement of the Paramount Chief's queens determined the major divisions into which the nation was split residentially, with a senior queen in charge of each major royal village, and lesser queens in charge of politically dependent royal villages. At the bottom, the man with two or three wives saw his sons group themselves round their mothers while retaining a common allegience to him.

Thus we see that in 'the time of peace' marriage was tied to a clear-cut residential system based on patrilineal descent and virilocal residence, modified by political status deriving ultimately from the Paramount Chief. The position of males in this system was determinate, although not unalterable. By the processes of marriage males were supplied with legitimate offspring. Although descent and succession were traced through males, the pattern of segmentation of this patrilineal system was determined by the organization of wives. The relative status of co-wives was perpetuated in the relationship between the segments which sprang from them.

In this system the elementary family of man, wife, and children did not emerge as an important grouping. In all serious enterprises a person derived support from his male agnates, and it was to the organized kin that the fertility of the woman was transferred by the payment of bridewealth. By the time a man had advanced in status sufficiently to be head of a division or a village, he had acquired many dependants who were not true kinsmen and his wives had been divided into bands. With the recently captured families, these considerations did not apply with quite the same force, for there were many poor men who had only one wife. These people depended on their political superior for cattle, and the women were to some extent under the control of his great wife, in so far as agricultural work and beer brewing were concerned. Even the rearing of children once they had been weaned was carried on outside the elementary family. Children were sent to their grandmother's house to be trained and indoctrinated with Ngoni values. The recent captives

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has the money to do so. Sometimes a wife brings her husband to court seeking damages from him for cruelty without asking for a divorce. 586

The woman who pleads for divorce on the ground of desertion is usually the wife of a labour migrant. Her struggle is not with her husband himself but with her affines, his kinsfolk who try to protect his interests for him while he is away. We shall consider this type of situation in the next chapter, where we deal with the relationship between a woman and her husband's kin. Here it will suffice to say that provided the man has been away for about four years without writing the divorce is usually granted.

Actions for adultery are always liable to turn into divorce cases, and the amount of damages awarded depends on whether or not a divorce is granted. If adultery is proved, and it is easier to prove than to disprove it, the woman and her lover each pay 30*s*. to the husband and 5*s*. fine to the court. If the woman is divorced on the ground of the adultery, the damages are increased to £3 each to the husband and 10*s*. each to the court. In court the woman is usually asked 'Which man do you love?' and if she selects her lover, the divorce is granted. Sometimes the husband protests that he wants his wife back, but if the court is persuaded that to send the woman back would only lead to more trouble, they will divorce the woman despite the protests of the husband. 684 586

When divorce is granted the legalization payment, if it has been made, should be returned. The court does not, however, make any definite order on this point unless called upon to do so by the man or his relatives, and it seems that in the absence of definite instructions to hand over the money, it is retained by the woman's relatives. This is particularly true when the divorce is on the ground of the man's desertion when it is likely that his interests will be poorly represented by his relatives. 586 583

If the husband has brought his wife to court in order to divorce her on some ground other than adultery, the court may merely tell the couple that they are divorced, without awarding damages to either party. But the law on this point appears to be changing, and the rule followed in one court is not always followed in another. Even in the same court the decisions given at one time may conflict with those given at another. If the court decides that the woman is at fault she may be ordered to pay £3 damages to her husband. If the man is at fault then, more rarely, the man is ordered to pay £3 damages to his wife. Occasionally, although the fault is held to lie with the man, the woman is ordered to pay £3 damages to secure her divorce. The factors influencing these decisions appear to be the readiness of any particular court to listen to the pleas of a woman, and its opinion of the character of the woman. A woman who is regarded as foolish, or given to quarrelling over nothing, or promiscuous, is sometimes ordered to pay damages to her husband 586 692 562

586 692 562 although the evidence presented during the hearing of the case has established the husband's fault as the ground for divorce.

Only if there is dispute over the matter will the court make an order about the division of crops. The principles of division are 586 that the crops belong to those who worked hard to grow them and that the children of the marriage have to be fed by the parent with whom they live, whoever may eventually have their custody. Thus in a case in which a woman successfully pleaded for divorce because of her husband's cruelty, the court awarded all the crops in the couple's garden to the husband, as the woman had been lazy and had done only a little towards their cultivation.

[583] Bridewealth is not automatically returned on divorce and as we have seen, divorce is the time for paying bridewealth rather than for retrieving it. The disposal of the children of a divorced couple is regarded as a separate issue and to be treated on its own merits.

[128] It is useful to have some quantitive estimate of divorce frequency, but the construction of a satisfactory measure is not easy. One aspect of the occurrence of divorce is presented in Tables IX and X, where the number of divorces experienced by wedded men and women of different ages is set out.

It will be seen that, considering only those wedded men and women whose divorces are known, the mean number of divorces per head of wedded population is 0·49 (51/104) for men and 0·30 (62/210) for women. This difference may be due in part to a greater reluctance on the part of women to admit to divorce, but is also due to the greater mobility of men. While women stay at home, their husbands go off to marry in the towns, divorcing their urban wives when they return home or when the strange rural environment proves intolerable to the women from the towns.

581 586 By considering the number of years that marriages have lasted, it is possible to say what is the mean duration of marriage. The necessary information was available for 403 marriages extant as well as completed, experienced by men and women who were resident in the sample villages. The mean duration of all these marriages is 15·6 years, and the mean duration of the marriages that ended in divorce is 6·6 years. The median duration of all marriages is, to the nearest year, 8 years, and of marriages ended in divorce, 5 years. More divorces occurred in the period from four-and-a-half years to five-and-a-half years after marriage than in any other similar one-year period.[25]

128 For comparison with other societies, we can express as a ratio the relationship between the number of marriages that ended in divorce and the number that did not or have not yet done so. This can be done in three ways, as set out in Table XI.

[25] There is no space here to give the method by which these calculations were made, but see my 'Measures of divorce frequency in simple Societies" *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, lxxix (1949) (pp. 37-62).

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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602 the parents of the couple. If the parents are not available other kinsfolk can substitute for them, but in general it is a man's or woman's father who represents the interests of their local group of kin in situations in which these interests are contrasted with those of the spouse's kin. It is the woman's father who receives all the different payments made in marriage, and he is free to keep the payments or to distribute them among his relatives as he thinks fit. If a woman's father is dead or away at work the payments are made to her brother or her father's brother or her mother or some other relative who, in this situation, is prepared to assume the responsibilities that would otherwise be borne by him. Similarly, most men find the money for marriage payments themselves, but if a man is too poor to do this, it is first to his father that he turns for assistance. If, however, his father is dead or poverty-stricken or unwilling to provide the money, he can ask some other relative for help. Here we are dealing with situations in which the father or his substitute [591] is acting as the representative of the loosely structured local group of kin in situations in which his own children are specifically involved. There are, however, certain specific kinship relations which we can separate out from the general operation of local kinship and which impinge on the marriage relationship. A grandmother has a particular interest in the sexual aspect of marriage. The eldest brother acts as intermediary between a man and his father in the marriage negotiations. Younger brothers are interested in the disposal of widows. Children have rights in the property of a married couple. These are more specific obligations and rights, and while it is possible to find substitutes if the genealogically correct relatives are not there, there is more rigidity in these matters than in those in which the initiative lies with the local group of kinsfolk whoever they may be.

603 We have mentioned that the grandmother who rears a girl may be in charge of her seclusion at puberty (p. 32). Even when some other old woman is in charge, the girl's grandmother has some responsibility for her sexual behaviour. If a man does not sleep with his wife she complains to his grandmother, and although a man is not instructed in sexual matters by his grandmother, he can discuss them more freely with her than with any other kinswoman. Grandmothers sometimes play an important part in the resolution of a marital quarrel in the village, and they often act as midwives. It is a man's grandmother who complains to him if his wife is not bearing children, and it is to her that he may turn for advice about medicines. In the courts, however, grandmothers do not play so important a role. They are women, and important women use their influence more in village situations than in court, where men are in [562] control and male councillors look to a man's brothers and father for confirmation of evidence.

593 There is considerable formality in the relationship between a man and his own parents and this formality appears to be greater if

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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easily. Paramount Chief Mpezeni III, in a Christmas broadcast in 1948, addressed to Ngoni workers in the towns, said

> Think not that I divorce your wives merely when they come to court. I do so when I see you send no money or clothes or you stay away for more than five years, not writing or sending anything to your families. I do this when they come to see me, both she and your parents. You do no good to your families by forgetting them all when you are in a strange country.

The grounds on which divorce is granted are more or less the same in the court and the village, but although the court, like the village assembly, thinks of itself as being primarily concerned with 'teaching people to live well together', it is also, unlike the village, concerned with reinforcing the power of the Native Authority bureaucracy and upholding the authority of the chiefs. Hence the court gives greater weight to the formalities of marriage and the theoretical rights inhering in the different payments. The chiefs, councillors, assessors, clerks, and police who make up the court are all men, whereas in the village meeting old and important women give their views and they are listened to with attention. My impression is that women are less favoured in the courts than they are in the village.

The law that the legalization payment shall be not less than thirty shillings was agreed to at a meeting of chiefs and their supporters in about 1944. Informants said that the law was introduced so that women as well as men could be punished for their adultery. It was argued that in a marriage in which no bridewealth had been paid, and only a few shillings as the legalization payment, the woman's kin could not in equity be called upon to pay damages on her behalf to her husband when she committed adultery. Adultery was thought to have increased, and women were as much to blame as men. By making the legalization payment a considerable amount, equal at the time to two months wages, it became possible to punish the woman in the same way as her lover. As we have seen, not everyone keeps this law, and women are married with a smaller amount as legalization payment, or with no payment at all. It is held by some people that a marriage certificate will not be issued unless at least thirty shillings legalization payment has been handed over, but in fact it is still possible to get a certificate when some smaller sum has been paid. In the light of developments in other tribes of the Eastern Province, it seems likely that before long thirty shillings legalization payment will become necessary before a certificate can be obtained.

One copy of the certificate is given to the man and another to the woman. With the help of her certificate, and of letters from her husband showing he is calling her to join him, a woman can get a pass from the court allowing her to buy a ticket on the bus going to the railway line or to Nyasaland. These certificates have therefore considerable value, and one woman's pass may be used by another

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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if the latter is unable to leave the area legally.[38] Various devices have been introduced to prevent women from using other people's passes, such as recording finger-prints on the certificate. On the other hand there are a great variety of ways in which women contrive to leave the area without a proper pass, such as marrying the bus driver for the duration of the journey, getting off the bus and walking round the control points, and so on.

13. The Administration and the missions

Under the Laws of Northern Rhodesia, which guide the Administration, the only valid marriages between Africans are those performed in accordance with 'customary tribal law'. There has never been any systematic attempt to codify the rules implied by this phrase, and in any particular case that comes before the Administration's courts, the views of individual African assessors must carry weight. The tendency has been to try and discover what used to happen in the old days rather than what was the *de facto* law at the time. On the other hand, there appears to have been a feeling that women were entitled to certain rights in equity that may perhaps have been associated with the proviso that 'customary tribal law' shall not be administered when it is 'repugnant to natural justice and morality'. The Administration has certainly been sympathetic towards deserted wives seeking divorce and has encouraged Native Courts to allow their pleas where the husband has been many years away and has not written home. In the past the District Officer on tour has divorced batches of women who had applied in vain to the Native Courts for divorce on the ground of desertion. It has been argued by the Administration that since chiefs depend on the gifts of returned labour migrants to supplement their own income, they are reluctant to offend men by divorcing their wives in their absence. There are fewer divorces, in relation to the same number of pleas, granted in Ngoni courts than among the neighbouring Cewa, who are subject to the same Administrative and mission influences. The Ngoni find no consolation in this comparison. They merely observe that there are more divorces now than there used to be, and blame the Whites for the change.

The missions are all concerned with the development of Christian marriage, but their ideas as to what this is differ from one denomination to another, as do their views on the relationship of Christian to other types of marriage. The White Fathers and the Universities Mission to Central Africa do not allow divorce, while the Dutch Reformed Church Mission does. The U.M.C.A. insist that all 'customary obligations' shall be fulfilled before a marriage can be solemnized between Christians, the White Fathers

[38] Cf. Barnes, op. cit. pp. 245f for the rules regulating the movement of women beyond Fort Jameson District.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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of maternal ties, the cleavage between sets of father's children is an expression more of their different matrilateral affiliations than of the different status of their mothers. A child will be sent to its own mother's mother rather than to its father's wife's mother, although some children do go to the latter. Samuel's children by his first and third wives [3] were reared by their father's fourth wife's mother, but they maintain contact with their own mothers' relatives.

These particular structural changes have taken place without any great conflict of values. It would appear that although polygyny was an essential feature of the old system, there was no idea that it was wrong to remain monogamous. Indeed in any community with a normal sex ratio, the majority of men must be monogamists and it is not surprising that monogamy is tolerated however much polygyny is the goal of ambitious men. Among the Ngoni the decline in polygyny over the last fifty years has not outraged traditional values. In like manner, we have seen that traditionally a man's mother and his wife's mother should share the rearing of his children. This division is in accord with the statement made frequently by aristocratic Ngoni that when distributing gifts a man ought not to favour his own parents more than his wife's. Both these injunctions indicate that even in 'the time of peace', however clearly a man's children by a wife for whom he had paid bridewealth belonged to his group and not to hers, the claims of a wife's kinsfolk and their interest in the children of the marriage were recognized. Ngoni say that children ought to live in their father's village, but this is a statement of the same order as the oft-reiterated remark that the Ngoni pay bridewealth. Ngoni make these statements because these are part of the index of their tribal identity, not because they have observed them to be true. The facility with which married couples live uxorilocally is no doubt partly due to the influence of the matrilineal uxorilocal Cewa and other tribes, but we cannot regard this as the only operative factor.

4. The moral significance of sexual activity

In the treatment of sexual activity in girls there does appear to be a certain moral dilemma. We have observed that the Cewa believed that a girl who did not copulate at puberty would die, and that the Ngoni held that a girl should be chaste until she was married, which was some time after puberty. The seclusion of girls was, and is, a matter arranged by women and one in which men have very little say. It may be on this account that the Cewa view has largely prevailed, for the Ngoni took many women captives and in the early stages of the migration from Natal there seem to have been more Ngoni men than women. The women were not so carefully indoctrinated into the Ngoni way of life as were men captives, for the women's regimental system was never as highly

[3] See above, p. 109

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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developed as the men's. It is to be expected, therefore, that there would be greater Cewa and Nsenga influence in those affairs controlled by women than in political and military matters, which were organized by men. This is borne out by linguistic evidence, for while many of the words, but not all, pertaining to affairs of state are of Ngoni origin, the words now used in the seclusion of girls are drawn from Cewa and Nsenga.

We find therefore that it is the bearing of children before marriage and to a lesser extent pre-marital impregnation which are disapproved of rather than pre-marital copulation. The real contrast in attitude is between pre-marital copulation and adultery. We have seen that in the old days adulterers were killed by order of the chief. The punishment of adultery was a process involving headmen, lieutenants and other important men. The abhorrence of adultery remains despite its great frequency and the prohibition on killing adulterers. An adulterer is a thief, stealing the rights of another man and endangering his marriage. Even when the wife of a labour migrant bears a child and it is in danger of *mdulo* until it can be 'taken up' (p. 87) she cannot openly call in a man with whom to perform this rite. She must either get a man to come in secret or obtain expensive medicines which remove the danger. In like manner, if her husband is impotent, there must be no public recognition of any extra-marital intercourse, for impotence is shameful and not to be admitted and cannot justify the intervention of another man. It is thought regrettable that a woman should grow old without bearing daughters to help her pound maize and sons to clothe her in her old age. Yet when medicines have been of no avail and her husband calls in a seed-raiser he must come in secret and later be rewarded covertly. Similarly the sexual activities of children must be conducted discreetly. Here, however, a much more tolerant attitude is taken and there is not the same need for secrecy. There is no chaperoning of unmarried girls but only of married women whose husbands are away. There is no inspection of girls at marriage, and one informant said that if after puberty a girl has no lover with whom she can sleep, her grandmother will call in a young man to copulate with the girl in the grandmother's house to see if she is proficient, and that for this he would be rewarded by the grandmother. From one point of view we may say that there is pre-marital freedom, with discretion, and marital restriction of sexual activity. Pre-marital intercourse does, however, have a moral connotation, and it is held that the girl who sleeps too easily with all comers before marriage will continue thus after she is married. The need for discretion in premarital affairs is in some part due to the activities of the missions, working at the village level through deacons, elders and women helpers. Yet in general no action is taken by the local Christian group in the village unless the pre-marital sexual activities of its members are conducted in such a way that it is no longer possible to ignore them.

Sexual intercourse is the critical activity of marriage. Within

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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this they put the blame on the women. They point out that while they were on the march the local women they picked up, with their different language and customs, had not a great deal of influence on the community. Once they were settled, however, and married local women, those women went visiting to their own homes and took their children with them, and gradually a pronounced alien element and another language penetrated into Ngoni society. This is illustrated very well in the girls' initiation ceremonies, which differ very much in Ngoni and Chewa society. Ngoni men and women tell you with disgust how the *chinamwali*, the Chewa ceremony, began to be practised in Ngoni villages in place of the *umsindo* or *umgonxo* of the Ngoni. It was the only occasion on which I have heard them commend the action of the missionaries in putting down a custom, for they really despised the ceremonial and associations of the *chinamwali*, and rather than have it among them, they preferred outside help in putting it down.

The Ngoni dislike very much being asked point blank what cultural adjustments they made due to Chewa and other local customs. They admit reluctantly one or two minor adaptations, and proceed immediately to tell the major changes which they forced on the Chewa and others living under their rule. The chief adjustment by the Ngoni has undoubtedly been the adoption of the local language, as being the language of the women. Ngoni women of good family still speak Ngoni, but I have not found any instances of local women married to Ngoni men who have learned it. One of the perennial topics among the elders in an Ngoni village is the 'bad' influence of the women on the children. When pressed to explain the nature of this 'bad' influence, they say, 'The children are learning only the customs of the women. They cannot know about the Ngoni'. They lament the vanishing of the age-grades as the natural channels for instruction of young men in Ngoni customs, though they say with their characteristic realism, 'What is the good of having age grades and regiments when there is no war?'

If we were to attempt to reconstruct old Ngoni society as it was in the days before white contact, it is to this period, *chamtendere*, we should turn. There we can find the structure of Ngoni society, the distinctive Ngoni institutions, and Ngoni supremacy over the surrounding tribes as a reality. When the first white people arrived, as

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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Lupa goldfields and Dar-es-Salaam. Nowadays almost everyone goes by lorry, but now as then a man has to go a long way before he can arrive at an island of friends in one of the urban centres. This means that, for the Ngoni, emigration is a definite event, and does not occur as a result of a gradual drifting farther and farther away from the tribal area. Lorries run from Fort Jameson to Lusaka and to Lilongwe, and from Missale to Mtoko in Southern Rhodesia. There is also a lorry service from Lundazi to Fort Jameson, but this does not lead anywhere else, and is not used by Mpezeni's people except locally. Lusaka is on a railway line, Lilongwe is connected by bus and train to Blantyre, while Mtoko is on the way to Salisbury. It is these lorry routes which now provide the links with the outside world, and along which people and goods travel, the people in both directions, and the goods, apart from tobacco, mainly inwards. Use of these routes is controlled by the chiefs, the Administration, by economic factors, and by the weather. This last has been less important of late, and the roads are seldom impassable for more than a week at a time, however heavy the rains. In order to travel on the lorries from Fort Jameson a man must have a ticket, which costs £1 for the journey to Lusaka, and less for the trip to Lilongwe. The lorry service from Missale to Mtoko is free.

The Administration exercise control by insisting that no man shall leave the Territory of Northern Rhodesia unless he is in possession of an identification certificate endorsed by the Administration permitting him to do so. In practice, such endorsements are not usually made unless the man can produce written permission from the chief that he is free to go. This working arrangement is intended to ensure that men do not flee the country when there are cases pending against them, and to prevent unjustifiable desertion of wives and children. In fact men are sometimes given permission to go while cases in which they are involved are still unheard.

The emigration of women and children is further controlled in that there is a law[1] forbidding a woman to leave the tribal area except in the company of her husband, or with a pass to leave from the Native Authority. Sucking children are allowed to accompany their mothers, but other children under the age of sixteen are not allowed to leave the province without permission of the Native Authority,[2] while boys

[1] Ngoni Native Authority Order 24.

[2] Ngoni N. A. Order 39. The child must be either accompanied by its parents or else accompanied by a guardian on the way to join its parents.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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486 562 858 over sixteen are not allowed to leave without a pass from their Native Authority until they have paid tax for one year at home.[1] These laws are quite energetically enforced, principally by the placing of Native Authority police at strategic points along the lorry routes. These police inspect the passes of all passengers on the lorries, and bring offenders before the nearest Native Court.

486 562 The devices adopted to evade these restrictions are much as one might expect. The drivers of the lorries may be won over, particularly by women. A woman may get a lorry driver to say that she is his wife, or even enter into a temporary marriage with him, if she wishes to run away without a ticket. Some people walk to the far side of the police point and then attempt to get on the lorry after the search has been completed. A woman who has a ticket but no pass may pose as the wife of some unaccompanied male passenger.

484 167 The motives for leaving the area are many. Most of the men go to look for work, although a few go away to visit their urban relatives and friends for a holiday. Others go to buy goods that may be unobtainable locally for the time being, such as tools or window-panes, or which they think they can get more cheaply elsewhere, such as bicycles. Many of the women go to join their husbands, but some are fleeing from them, or have grown tired of living at home married to men who live permanently in Southern Rhodesia, and are out to try their luck in the towns.

489 Whereas the outgoing lorries are comparatively empty of goods, the returning passengers are well loaded with belongings. The fares are higher, and the Mtoko–Missale service is not free on the northward trip. One of the most important commodities brought in along these 205 routes is the mail. Men working in Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere write home to keep their wives and brothers informed of their whereabouts, and send postal orders to enable their families to buy clothes.

This movement to and from the outside world must be seen in its relationship to the opportunities that exist for employment within the District on the tobacco farms.

Farm Labour

464 249 [361] No village in either of the reserves occupied by the Ngoni is more than 12 miles from a farm. This means that it is possible for a man to work as a labourer on a farm and yet retain a large number of his contacts with his village and chief. In particular, his wife and children

[1] Ngoni N. A. Order 37.

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159 161 173 518 693 648

In 1828 Zongendaba, who had met with Mzilikazi near the border of Portuguese East Africa, fought him over a petty disagreement, which it is alleged was a dog fight. Mzilikazi beat Zongendaba, who moved on into Portuguese East Africa between the Limpopo and the Sabi Rivers and united himself with Manukuza; this was the year of Tshaka's assassination. In 1831 we find Manukuza and Zongendaba midway between the Limpopo and Zambesi Rivers.

In the year 1833, in which Manukuza attacked the Portuguese and drove them out of Espirito Santo (Lourenco Marques), Manukuza and Zongendaba disagreed and a fight took place, after which Zongendaba and his following, accompanied by Mhlabawadabuka, a brother of Manukuza, continued the migration north.

In the following year, 1834, on the border of what is now S. Rhodesia, Zongendaba broke with Mhlabawadabuka and proceeded in a north-westerly direction, where at the Ingwe-Kwizi River he met the Ba-Lozi or Ba-Nyai, whom he destroyed; their chief, Mambo, was killed, some thirty miles from the battlefield at Intaba-Zi-Ka-Mambo. In November of the year 1835, at the time of an eclipse, a passage was found across the Ukwombe River (Zambesi) at Manyerere on the south bank, nearly opposite Zumbo on the north bank in Portuguese East Africa. At the crossing a dispute arose between Zongendaba and an induna, Ngabi Maseko, who with a small following remained on the south bank and, it is stated, crossed over the following year near Tete.

[805]

Zongendaba, after crossing, halted for a period whilst his impis looted the surrounding country; his camp was built at Mkoko. About 1839 a movement in an easterly direction was made, it is said, by Gwaza Tole, who was a brother-in-law to Zongendaba and his Chief Councillor, because, acting on Zongendaba's instructions, he had put to death one of Zongendaba's wives for infidelity; Zongendaba followed. The direction was changed, after passing to the west of the present Fort Jameson, to a more northerly one passing the head-waters of the Bua River en route.

[645] [684]

In 1840 at Chulu, Mbelwa or Mombera was born, son of Zongendaba by his wife Umnese. Thence on to the Rukuru Valley.

In 1842 Zongendaba arrived in the Fipa country, and the next two years were spent in raiding the surrounding country of the Sukuma and Msafwa.

159 173 643

In 1843 Zongendaba died. It is stated that he had never seen or been seen by a European, that he was fierce with his soldiers and his wives who, on the least excuse, he put to death, that he was very kind and considerate to his captives, and that he listened to two men only, Gwaza Tole and Njokwane. He died at Mapupu in the Fipa country and was buried in a black ox skin near the Nyinaluzi River. On his death bed he gave his assegai to his eldest son and heir (by his Great Wife, Soeers), Ntutu Mpezeni, who was then in his twentieth year.

[766] [428]

159 173 562

(2) Loziwawa Nqumayo was the wife of Zongendaba—"The Great Wife, Inkosikazi". She was born before the accession of Tshaka, about the year 1800, in the tribal area near St. Lucia Bay. She was Zongendaba's "great chosen wife" and died during the great

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migration about 1833; her burial place is unknown. She died without issue. She was the eldest daughter of Nombhengula, who was a brother of Zwide and Sigode, and a son of Langa Vimba Nqumayo. She was a cousin to Manukuza, son of Sigwile, and to Nompetu, daughter of Zwide, who married Matshobana, the father of Mzilikazi. Sometimes it happens that a great wife or other *major* wife is not blessed with children. In these cases another woman is placed in her "house" with the object of raising seed to it. The children resulting are looked upon as children of the establishment in which their mother was "placed" and are in the same position as if born to the *major* wife; the eldest son of a chief's "Great Wife" inherits the chieftainship of the tribe on the death of his father. This was, and is, the custom of the Ngoni; it is also known to the Achewa and Anyanga Tribes. This custom is known to the Ngoni as *Nchikuza*.

Zongendaba therefore took as *Nchikuza* Soera Nqumayo, a younger sister of Luziwawa, and by her he had issue as follows:—Ntutu Mpezeni, the eldest son, "the Inkwasa of the Indhlunkulu," Jakose, Mtwalalichi, and Ndhlobvu Makekevu. Soera was born about 1808 near St. Lucia Bay. She migrated with the chief and followed him through all his wanderings until his death, after which she accompanied her son and heir, Ntutu Mpezeni, into what is now the Fort Jameson district. There she settled in her village called "Dingeni," where she died in 1900 and was buried near the site of the old village of Mtenguleni Uka Soera close to the Kakolo stream; her grave is now marked by an euphorbia tree. The site is on the farm owned by Major Jefferies, O.B.E., which prior to the invasion of the Ngoni used to be the land of the Achewa chief, Kampara.

Soera is well remembered by many natives who are living to-day, and although she died at a great age it is said that she was in possession of her full faculties until the last. She is described as being a real chieftainess and it is said that in later years if annoyed by the younger generation she would lay about her with her *nchize* (staff) in a lusty manner. Many amusing tales are told of her astuteness and dry humour.

After Zongendaba's death, Soera chose for a very beautiful woman, named Nthonane, who was a young sister-wife to the house and who had borne no children, one, Sawaza Mazunko, as a seed raiser, for which he received twenty head of cattle. A daughter was born and named Ndawiri Jere; she now resides in the Fort Manning District of Nyasaland and from her this information was obtained. Ndawiri looked upon Ntutu Mpezeni as her brother, and Ndawiri was, and is, looked upon as one of Zongendaba's children. She married Ndawombi, since dead, and has one son, Ndawombi Hara.

It is agreed by the old indunas that Ntutu Mpezeni would have been about nine years of age when he crossed over the Zambesi, that he was carried across as befitted a Paramount Chief's heir, that, prior to the crossing, Zongendaba had given him a little shield and an assegai, and that he had killed his first duiker buck before the crossing. This is also borne out by the sons of Zimakazi Lava Ngoma and Ngandu Mbawa, both of whose fathers were set the task of being servants to the chief's heir in his youth.

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159 173 [567] Zimakazi Lavu Ngoma of the Angonga tribe worked for Soarea when he was a youth. Zimakazi was caught and made a slave in 1835, the year of the crossing. Ngungu Ngoma, his son, has often heard this from his father and the chieftainess, Soarea. Zimakazi died a few years before his mistress. His son, Ngungu Ngoma, is in the N. Rhodesia Government Service and is about fifty years of age.

[562] [593] (3) Chibenya Mkhalapi. This was the first wife of importance of Zongendaba, the *ikohlwa* wife. When Zongendaba's mother, Mquanache Nzima, died, Chibenya was taken out of the chief's house and put in his mother's place and called "the Great Mother." This is a well-known custom amongst the Ngoni. The date of her death and place of burial are not known by the present day chiefs. It is stated by some of the indunas that she accompanied Zongendaba north and crossed the Zambesi in 1835, by others that she was the mother of Mtwalu, but this appears doubtful.

[645] [701] (4) Gwaza Tole. Brother-in-law of Zongendaba; Chief Councillor and one of the great indunas. Tribe, Ngoni; regiment, Machaya Imiti. Father, Nzyekwere (Njekwere), mother and wife, not known; sons, Mamkambewa and Chitete.

[554] Zongendaba had married one of Gwaza's sisters. He appears to have been an elderly and very wise councillor, in whom the chief placed great trust and whose advice the indunas and captains readily accepted. Gwaza killed one of Zongendaba's wives on his [578] instructions, possibly his own sister. This led to ill feeling, and it is stated that Gwaza and certain others of his following kept apart from the chief after this affair. He died at Fipa and was buried there in 1848.

159 173 167 (5) Zulu Gama. Father, Njeru; mother, not known; wife, Nyaliwa.

Zongendaba married a sister of Zulu Gama (possibly Mambowe Gama) before the Zambesi crossing. They had no issue.

On the upward trek after crossing the Zambesi River to the Fipa country, Zulu Gama left his wife, Nyaliwa, at a village near Kasitu; she had a son by him named Paulus Gama, to whom Zulu Gama left villages at Luanjazi near Maimbo.

[578] After Zongendaba's death, Zulu Gama and a following broke away, and were followed by the adherents of Mombera. A fight took place near what is now Old Langenburg, and Mombera's people were scattered by this wily old induna. He crossed the Shire River in 1868. He entered Senga and died there later. Chief Ngabi Mawko was killed by [554] Zulu Gama. Zulu Gama appears to have been a general of high qualities and a sound councillor.

159 173 [701] [645] (6) Njekwane Ntilla. Father, Mpangu, a brother of Hlatshwayo; mother, Manyuwanane; wife, Mtonga Jojo; sons: Kapatamoyo I., Sendwani, Hoye Chafumela, Chulu, Mene, Mazwe. A cousin of Chief Zongendaba. Chief Induna of the Zimpefu regiment and Chief Induna of the Council. Died at Mpindeka Hill, Matambazi River, in the year 1866.

(7) Mgazi Komalo. Father, Hlatshwayo; mother, unknown; wife, Bidzi Nkhosi. Regiment, Majekwane. Died in the Ufipa Country 1849.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

condition. It helped to maintain the comparatively high morality of the people. And it was never allowed to go to the extremes that the Tonga or others went to when a single chief would have 100 wives. The expensiveness of marriage put a limit on a man's matrimonial ambitions. Yet polygamy was essentially an evil custom. It was based on sensuality and on indolence. And when Christianity comes bringing industry, and self-restraint, it must disappear.

In the old days the chiefs would not allow the men to marry till they were over thirty, and the women were strong and full grown. This preserved the splendid physique of the tribe. But now the laxer customs of the Central Africans is telling on the Ngoni, and one of our hardest tasks is to absolutely refuse marriage to couples whom we think to be too young for this serious responsibility. I have a marriage service every Tuesday, at which I usually unite eight or ten couples in holy wedlock. But these have first of all to come to me that I must judge by appearance, for they cannot tell their ages, whether they have reached the stature of manhood and womanhood. Then if I am satisfied the banns are published and they are married.

But before a man has reached this stage, he must first pay his father-in-law a dowery for his daughter. The value of the dowery varies, according to the rank of the family into which he would marry. The daughter of a chief might be worth to her father as much as twenty cattle, while a slave might only receive two or three goats This also was a great restraint on early marriages, for a man could not marry until he had time to gain a little wealth, and pay for his wife.

The position of a wife of an aristocrat was one of considerable ease and dignity. She had to work certainly, but she had also a considerable following of slaves to assist her in her labours. But the position of the wives of the commoners was little better than that of slaves. When the rains came on the husband sallied out with his wives. He sat on an ant hill and snuffed, and from this exalted position directed the labours of his wives who hoed.

In this the Ngoni were less noble than their neighbours, for many of the surrounding people think it is a disgrace to send the woman to the gardens. When the harvesting came, the women went to the gardens and reaped and carried home the grain, while the husband prepared the barns. And women pounded the grain and cooked it. While the men had the pleasure of eating it.